United Nations

Daily Highlights

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THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Twenty-five UNOMIL observers escape to Côte d'Ivoire after being detained in Liberia; ECOMOG helps foil attempted coup d'état in Monrovia.

+ Secretary-General, in Beijing, meets with Chinese President and Premier; has talks with King Sihanouk of Cambodia.

+ United Nations asks 50 States to contribute personnel for projected second phase of arrangements for Haiti.

+ UNPROFOR Commanders meet with NATO Military Committee in Brussels; UNHCR expresses concern at obstruction of convoys bound for Bosnian enclaves.

+ Special Envoy for Tajikistan says opposition leaders meeting in Tehran are close to limited cease-fire agreement.

+ Under-Secretary-General Annan arrives in Somalia to conduct four-day review of political and security situation.

+ General Assembly authorizes Secretary-General to commit $37 million for operational needs of UNAMIR from 5 April to 30 September.

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After being detained for almost a week, 25 military observers from the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) have made their way to Côte d'Ivoire, a spokesman for the Organization announced today. He noted that some of them had been mistreated by their captors. There was no news of the other 18 observers who had been detained by a faction of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL).

Meanwhile, elements of the Liberian armed forces today attempted to stage a coup d'état in Monrovia. They took control of the executive mansion, but the Military Observer Group of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOMOG) surrounded the building and gave them an ultimatum to get out. The

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spokesman said that the failed coup highlighted the factionalism that had made it so difficult to secure peace in Liberia.

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Continuing his visit to the People's Republic of China, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today had a meeting with President Jiang Zemin. He acknowledged China's contributions to peace-keeping and invited even greater involvement, and expressed the hope that it would participate at the highest levels in the upcoming Security Council Summit. The Secretary-General then met with Premier Li Peng, and discussed the International Conference on Population and Development, United Nations peace-keeping operations, and regional conflicts.

The Secretary-General also met with King Norodom Sihanouk of Cambodia, and discussed the situation there. The King thanked the United Nations for its role in restoring peace to his country, but expressed concern regarding the Khmer Rouge, the lack of reconstruction and the human rights situation. He also briefed the Secretary-General on the status of negotiations to free the three western hostages being held in Cambodia.

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The United Nations has asked 50 Member States for contributions of military forces and military and civilian police for the projected second phase of arrangements for Haiti. A spokesman for the Organization said Bangladesh, Bolivia, Canada, France, Nepal, the Russian Federation, Suriname, the United States, and some Caribbean countries had committed personnel, while Slovakia had offered a military hospital. Argentina, Fiji, the Netherlands, India, Ireland, Peru and Ukraine might also make contributions.

The spokesman said Bangladesh, France and Fiji had offered to contribute 16 of the 60 observers needed for the early phase. Canada had also offered some civilian police monitors.

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The Force Commander of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), General Bertrand de Lapresle, and Lieutenant-General Michael Rose met today in Brussels with the Military Committee of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). They discussed the ongoing relationship between UNPROFOR and NATO and contingency planning for the Force's withdrawal should the arms embargo against the Bosnian Muslims be lifted, according to a United Nations spokesman.

Meanwhile, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has expressed concern over the obstruction by the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) of convoys bound for the eastern enclaves in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The agency also said that convoys bound for Bihac were being stopped by Bosnian Serb authorities in Knin.

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The Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Tajikistan, Ramiro Piriz-Ballon, has reported that Tajik opposition leaders are close to an agreement on a limited cease-fire, according to a United Nations spokesman. Mr. Piriz-Ballon said that if ongoing talks in Tehran, Iran, were successful, he would make plans for a third round of formal negotiations between the parties. Those talks might be held from 10 to 15 October in Islamabad, Pakistan.

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The Under-Secretary-General for Peace-keeping Operations, Kofi Annan, arrived today in Somalia, where he will spend four days reviewing the political and security situation. Mr. Annan was expected to have talks with Special Representative Victor Gbeho; the Force Commander of the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II), General Datuk Aboo Samah; the Coordinator of Humanitarian Affairs, Carrol Faubert; and representatives of United Nations agencies.

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The General Assembly has authorized the Secretary-General to commit over $37 million gross ($38 million net) to meet the operational needs of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) from 5 April to 30 September. That amount would be in addition to the $62 million gross previously authorized for the period from 5 April to 31 October. The additional funds will meet costs associated with the expansion of UNAMIR's mandate by the Security Council in May, and with the altered circumstances in Rwanda.

The Assembly asked all States and international organizations to urgently extend further support to the Republic of Moldova, which has recently suffered from drought and other disasters. It called on the Secretary-General to assist in the rehabilitation efforts of Moldova's Government, in cooperation with relevant United Nations bodies.

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